Sale of foodgrains meant for Poor

939. MISS MABEL REBELLO:
SHRI BJ. PANDA:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the reports captioned, "Grains meant for poor sold for profit", appearing in the Hindustan Times dated the 19th June, 2002; if so, the details of the scam;

(b) the details of the *modus-operandioi* the accused in selling away the food meant for distribution among the poor under the Antyodaya Anna Yojna; and

(c) the details of the food sold away in black in the open market and whether any help, involvement of connivance of Government officials was also detected in this racket; if so, the details thereof with action taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI U.V. KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The State Government of Jharkhand has reported that the Deputy Commissioner, West Singhbhum has been asked to enquire into the report. Further necessary action would be taken by the State Government on receipt of the enquiry report.

Black-Marketing of foodgrains meant for PDS

940. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have conducted any survey/study/

assessment of the quantity of foodgrains and other items finding way to the black-market from the Public Distribution System;

(b) if so, the findings thereof; and

(c) the details of the action taken by Government to plug such losses from the Public Distribution System?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI U.V. KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) The Tata Economic Consultancy Service (TECS) was engaged by the Department of Food & Public Distribution in the year 1997 for a study to assess the exient of diversion of foodgrains, sugar and edible oil from PDS in the country.

(b) At the national level, the diversion has been estimated at 36% in case of wheat and 31 % in case of rice as per the study report.

(c) Government has initiated the following measures to strengthen the Public Distribution System and to make it transparent and accountable.

(i) The Public Distribution System (Control) Order has been issued on 31.8.2001 under Section 3 of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955. As per the provisions of the Order willful adulteration, substitution, diversion, theft of stocks from the Central godowns to fair price shops or at premises of the fair price shop shall be liable for criminal punishment under Section 7 of Essential Commodities Act, 1955.

(ii) A Task Force has been constituted to look into the irregularities in the implementation of Targetted Public Distribution System and Antyodaya Anna Yojana in the identified areas.

(iii) States/UTs have been asked to actively involve the Gram Panchayats in rural areas and the local bodies in urban areas in the monitoring of the functioning of fair price shops as a measure of social audit.